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Speech by General Murdani 3 February 1990 Dili, East Timor

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The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign

Speech by Defence Minister, General Benny Murdani
in Dili, East Timor, 3 February 1990

Introductory remarks of Governor Mario Carrascalao

Bapak Minister of Defence and group, ladies and gentlemen,

With the presence of the Minister in East Timor this evening, we have the opportunity of receiving guidance and directives from him in connection with the ceremony of our entering a new era. After for some years of being closed, after eleven years, the system of government has been opened up, where all regulations and provisions in force in this unitary Republic of Indonesia have begun to apply, in accordance with presidential decision of 29 December 1988.

Quite naturally, after things have changed, we need directives that can be given by someone who has followed all developments in East Timor right from the very start up to the present. This person is Bapak General Benny Murdani, Bapak Minister of Defence and Security.

Bapak Minister, ladies and gentlemen,

On this occasion, there are present in this hall all the regional heads, all heads of the vertical departments, all members of the DPRD (regional assembly) and its leadership, all members at first level and second level, ABRI (armed forces) officers and civilian officials, leaders of the community, religious leaders and leaders of institutions. We are all present here this evening in the hope that we will get guidance from Bapak Minister as our directives here in East Timor in implementing our respective tasks as Indonesian citizens here in the 27th province of the unitary Republic of Indonesia.

So as not to waste any more time, I think this is enough from me by way of introduction, and I would like to invite Bapak Minister to give us his guidance and directives. That is all, and thank you. [Applause]

Speech by Defence Minister, General Benny Murdani

Governor/Head of District of East Timor, Commander of the Udayana Military Command, ladies and gentlemen,

Just now, the Governor said that I would give you guidance. Of course, you want to know what my guidance is related to, what matter is to be discussed and why it is the Minister of Defence and Security who has come here.

Saudara Governor has just said that I am one of those who know a bit about the affairs of East Timor, and probaly Saudara Governor is not mistaken because I have known him and quite a few of the people I see present here since around 1975. So I know that up to 1975, East Timor belonged to or was the colony of a country named Portugal; it then experienced upheavals which are now part of history. I probably don't know how many schools there are in East Timor, how many churches, how many officials work for the local administration. That's true, because I have not gone deeply into such things. But what I think I know very well indeed is that before integration, there were three political parties in East Timor. One was called Apodeti, one was called UDT, one was called Fretilin. There were also two small parties, Kota and Trabalista.

Every one of you here, except those from outside this region of Timtim, was probably in past times a member of Apodeti, or a member of UDT, or a member of Fretilin. I know that. And because of the nature of my work, I know which of you were good UDT and which were bad UDT. I also know which of you were Fretilin who subsequently became good and which were formerly not good. And I also know which of you were genuine Apodeti members and which of you only pretended to be Apodeti members. I know all that.

I also know that in this region, the majority of inhabitants are Catholics, while a few of the inhabitants are not Catholics. I also know that there are two small islands, one called Atauro and one called the island of Jaco. Perhaps many of you don't know that. Another thing that I also know is that this island produces coffee. I know that there was 13 administration units which are now called *kabupaten*. I know there were Portuguese soldiers and I know the names of these people. These are the things I know, along with some other things. Perhaps some of these things

have changed, perhaps nothing has been added. What there is less of now is Portuguese people. There are no more Portuguese except for some who are happy to remain in Timtim because, over there, there are no jobs. There are far too many people and not enough jobs, so it's better to remain here in Timtim because there aren't any jobs there. In winter people have to wear shoes, they have to have overcoats and blankets. Over here, if someone has no shoes throughout the year, he won't die. People sleep without blankets. Probably even in the hottest dry season, we don't need blankets. Over there in Portugal people probably don't need mosquito-nets but here, you need mosquito-nets because of the very severe malari. These are things that I know.

After 14 years of integration, after integration was implemented or granted, after a delegation of the provisional government of East Timor went to Jakarta to ask for East Timor to be integrated into the Republic of Indonesia on 17 July 1976. At that time Timtim was still usually called Timport, which meant Portuguese Timor. Then, step by step, starting with political affairs, Timtim did not at first take part in general elections and then it took part in general elections. It changed from a region which enjoyed special rights; while other regions were not allowed to import certain goods, the government still allowed Timtim to be supplied directly from abroad. At first, Timtim's budget of revenue and expenditure was regulated in a way not known in other regions of Indonesia, later on Timtim's budget became the same as elsewhere. In cultural affairs, for instance, there used to be only a very small number of schools, but now I don't know how many schools there are, how many hundreds or thousands. Formerly in military affairs, all Timtim people joined the Portuguese army, now there are some Timtim people who have joined the army. It's true, no-one has yet become a general. Let's hope one day, young cadres from Timtim will be so good that their children can be sent to ABRI academies and eventually become generals. And so on, and so on.

What I want to say with all this is that Timtim has changed from being the colony of a foreign country to gradually becoming part of Indonesia. This happened gradually because, if in '76, all regulations had been applied here, there probably wouldn't have been enough Timorese who understood and could speak Indonesia so as to be able to understand these regulations or read the laws, or who would have been able to interpret the regulations properly. That's why things were handled in a special way. But last year, at the suggestion of Saudara Governor who said, We are part of Indonesia and therefore we in Timtim want to be treated like other Indonesian citizens, we here in Timtim want to be treated like other provinces. No special arrangements, nothing closed any more. So now it is the second year when Timtim has one hundred per cent shown itself to be standing shoulder to shoulder with the other 26 provinces, welcoming the future. Naturally with its own characteristics, just like Aceh has its own characteristics, Irian Jaya has its own characteristics, NTT has its own characteristics.

One characteristic of Central Java where I come from which has a population of about 30 million, is that the people eat rice, they don't eat sago. They wear kain on ceremonial occasions. Another characteristic of Central Java is that for a long time already, since 100 or 80 years ago, there have been many schools and mosques, many churches. And there has been a large population so that, quite naturally, the type of development has been influenced by these things. If we compare this with Timtim which in '76 declared itself integrated into Indonesia, there is a gap from '46 to '76, thirty years. In 1976, the school-children in Central Java sang Indonesia Raya [the Indonesian national anthem] and could speak Indonesian well. But in Timtim in '76, they were singing Indonesia Raya for the first time. And only there did they start speaking the Indonesian language and take on the culture of Indonesia, while applying the characteristics of Timtim. Whereas in Central Java, people have already for a long time called each other Saudara, Saudara President, Saudara Camat or Saudara Governor, here in Timtim, you use the term Tuan [Mr], Tuan Governor, Tuan this and Tuan that. Now, the Governor says Bapak Minister. That's more friendly.

This is what I want to use as a measure for the differences that then become one. Indonesia has reached its present position, composed of 27 provinces, through step by step development. This was not achieved in a day. Before independence, the provinces which we know today were different. There were the provinces of

South Sumatra, Central Sumatra and North Sumatra. Now there are eight provinces. They have grow and developed all the time. Then there were schools, because after independence from the Dutch in '45, young Indonesian boys and girls flocked into the schools. Six years in primary school, 3 years in the lower secondary schoo, 3 years in upper secondary school and 4 to 7 years in higher education.

In religious matters, people have, little by litte, become freer to practice their religious rites, whether in the mosque, in the churches, Catholic or Protestant, in the Buddhist or Hindi temples without discrimination. They all have the same skin, all are Indonesians. Some are Muslims, some are Protestants, some are Catholics, some are Hindus and some are Buddhists. This too went through difficult times, but in the end, it was achieved.

Timtim is known as the youngest Indonesian province. It started in other provinces in '45. In Timtim it only started in July '76, 32 years later. So of course, now, on 3 February 1990, progress in other regions is rather different from Timtim. Perhaps Timtim has the most churches and the most pastors because there are so many Catholics, but there aren't many doctors, lawyers, other experts, graduates from SMP/SMA, because Timtim only started in 1976. It's the same in other fields too. What I want to say is that this process cannot be achieved in a day. Everything takes time. Other regions of Indonesia experienced this. Things are different, one province is not the same as another province because of their characteristics and various other things. Government is set up, regulated, improved and eventually it turns out to be what we see now.

In every regional government, there is a Governor/head of district who is appointed by the Indonesian government. There is a DPRD and other authorities below, there are bupatis, camats, lurahs. And in every organisation, there is a hierarchy, channels from top to bottom and from bottom to top, as there are in ABRI and also in businesses. There is a head, two deputies and so many employees or officials, there are consultants. But one thing is clear - in every province, the person with the highest authority is the governor, not the bupati or the camat but the governor. This is our system. The bupati is under the governor, and so on, and so forth. Some governors stay in the post for one term, usually five years, and some have two terms. Some camats stay for one term and some for two, some lurahs, and so on. When the governor resigns, he is replaced by someone else and so on. When a school director resigns, he is replaced by someone else. When a commander comes to the end of his tour of duty, he is replaced by someone else. This is all part of the system of government that we now operate.

So, Saudara-Saudara, as we regulate, conduct and safeguard the affairs of government, we carry out a variety of activities continuously, which are interlinked, which are not disjointed. Specifically regarding Timtim, as I have just said, some things are of course different as compared with NTT, as compared with Irian Jaya, or with Central Java, as compared with North Sumatra. In my position as Minister of Defence in the cabinet, I do not handle security. Security is handled by the commander of ABRI. But I am involved in security affairs in so far as it concerns defence in general, not security. It is in this position that I am sitting here in front of you. I have said a little in the way of explanation but I would like to go a bit more deeply into which aspect of defence I consider it necessary to enter into this category.

You all know that Indonesia is now in the stage of development in all sectors, in the political sector, the economic sector, the social sector, the cultural sector and in defence/security affairs. There are many things that could become the topic this evening but I will limit myself to matters or to a matter in the defence sector which I consider to be sufficiently serious to warrant handling and which must be seriously followed up. This is the question of 'wawasan kebangsaan' which we often hear being referred to in a foreign language as 'nation-building'. Building a nation is not just gathering a few people together to create a state. The human beings in the state and that nation or community of people must be given the conviction, be given motivation, clarifications, so that the nation can become a well-consolidated nation.

Nation-building would be very easy if all the people were of one race, if they were all of one religion, if all were of the same profession and if they all lived in the same place. You all know that this is not the case in Indonesia. As we can all

see, our state is not just one landmass as in Europe, as in China, as in Australia, as in the United States. It consists of thousands of islands which stretch about 5,000 kns from west to east and 1,600 kms from north to south. Within this area of 5,000 by 1,600 kms, there are thousands of islands, 17,000 islands, which are inhabited by 180 million people. They have different religions, they come from different backgrounds and possibly have different cultural roots. This is what we have to unite into one, Bhinneka Tunggal Ika, Different but One. Not everyone has curly hair like East Timorese people, not all of them are Catholics like the East Timorese, not all of them eat sago like the East Timorese, not all of them get malaria like the East Timorese.

When we are in other areas, we cannot focus on all these differences. Some people say: why don't you break it down into small states. Forty years ago, our leaders were convinced that small states had no hope for the future. The island of Java which now has 100 million inhabitants and at that time had 40 million inhabitants produced very much rice but nothing other than rice. Sumatra had a small population but is three times the size of Java but it only produced, say, rubber. Kalimantan is a huge island with a small number of inhabitants but it only produced oil, and so on. So, no single region was able to stand on its own because it only produced rice. Of course, people can just eat rice all the time but a nation doesn't only need to eat rice, it needs other things.

[End of the first side of the tape.]

What do you want to eat, what does Timtim produce? That is a simple matter. But what is not simple is the location of our state, an archipelago called Indonesia which has no alternative but to be united because if not, one part will be drawn towards a big state there while another will be drawn towards a big state over there. The result would be that each island would be a state. This cannot be tolerated! The Indonesian people realised this in 1945 and it is realised in Timtim in 1990. If you don't realise it, you should realise that no island, or no ethnic group in Indonesia can stand on its own. We don't want that! That was laid down 1,100 years ago, not just by the Indonesian government in 1976 but 1,100 years ago. So don't dream about having an Irian state, an Ambon state, a state of Timtim. There is no such thing! In the past, there were some small states that wanted to stand on their own, and without hesitation, the Indonesian government took steps to stop that. All the forces at our disposal were used to prevent the creation of small states. And this also applies to Timtim. Some who want this are in the mountains, together with Xanana, with the so-called Fretilin; some of these people are here in .... [unclear] or in the local administration, where they are trying to split Timtim off from the territory of Indonesia. They too will be dealt with firmly.

And this is why we have been striving to do this up to the moment when Timtim was felt to be mature enough and capable of standing on its own, and could be opened up. From now on, Timtim is the same as other regions. So don't try to be latter-day heros, beating your breasts and proclaiming. 'I am a Timtim patriot.' There is no such thing as a Timtim patriot, there is only an Indonesian patriot. There is no such thing as a Timtim nation, there is only an Indonesian nation. Regardless of whether it comes from the community, from young kids who finished SMA only yesterday or from the church. Timtim in part of Indonesia, and the Indonesian government, whoever the president is, the government will maintain this situation. So no-one should dream about creating a state of Timtim. If anyone wants to talk about a state of Timtim, read first, take a look first at the situation outside Indonesia, and study Indonesian history. From that you will know and be persuaded that the government has only one resolve, to preserve the continuity of the unitary state, not a federal state. A state that stretches from Sabang to Merauke, including East Timor.

As regards governance or the question of nation-building, of feeling one although different, this is something that must be continually striven for. So I think this is all clear. Indeed, there are people, there are groups who, perhaps because they don't feel satisfied, have chosen a different path. That isn't forbidden, it isn't forbidden. But the attitude of members of government, of members of ABRI is as I have just said. If there are members of ABRI who want to create a state of Batak

and therefore don't want.... [unclear], that's okay, but he is not allowed to struggle for that inside ABRI. He must leave, or will be expelled from ABRI. Outside, he will be seen as being isolated in a sea of Indonesian people who want a unitary state, one! The same applies if he is a member of the government, or a member of Pemda [the local administration.]

If he doesn't agree with this opinion, then he should resign as a member of government. Then he can struggle for it by means of the struggle that has already been defeated there in the mountains, eating once in while the food that is sent from the towns. But don't do this kind of thing while still a member of government. That's clear, isn't it? It is the right of every person, every citizen to express an opinion, whoever he is. But I want to remind the citizen that he doesn't only have rights, he also has responsibilities. So don't just demand rights: 'We don't like Indonesia and we'd prefer to make our own state.' I have already said, if you try to make your own state and the movement is strong, sufficiently strong, it will be crushed by ABRI. ABRI may fail the first time, so it will try for a second time, and for a third time. But there have been bigger rebellions, there have been greater differences of opinion with the government than the small number calling themselves Fretilin, or whoever their sympathisers are here. We will crush them all! I repeat, we will crush them all! This is not in order to crush East Timorese but to safeguard the unity of Indonesian territory physically and in other ways.

There may be countries that are ready to give promises of help. You should learn to read and understand Indonesian or English, and then examine which are the states that want to help. The world is no longer divided up along these lines, in such divisions. And it is not easy to help a state which is part of another state to separate itself. If ..... [unclear], who is going to help?

There are people in Timtim who feel that prices here are higher than in Jakarta because the goods are perhaps manufactured in Jakarta, for example. But they are certainly more expensive here because of the transport costs. And that's just from Jakarta. If the country that wants to help is 4,000 kms from Jakarta, the transport costs will be four or five times greater. Where is the country that wants to help people to create their own state in a state that already exists, like Indonesia, whether it is Malaysia, or China, or Russia, or America? That's plain nonsense, so don't deceive yourselves! That's no good.

Time is needed to unify a state. And before that stage is reached, there can of course be people who are dissatisfied. But if they are dissatisfied, they should look at the question as a whole. We are led, and I am not satisfied, not satisfied with the governor. Remember, the governor represents the president here. He is the most senior official in a province, who represents the government and who runs the government. If the governor is not good enough, the DPRD is there to say that the governor has made mistakes. The governor can give his answer and the answer is always the same in other regions. If you want to set up a university here, then we say that we must have a university like Gajah Mada University, people will say, 'Wait a minute. Do we have enough students, do we have enough professors?' Perhaps only later on. Or, we want an airport like Cengkareng. It's an easy thing to build. It can be ready in a few years, but do we really need that? So don't send the wrong signals. Government policies must be wise. There may be mistakes here and there in the implementation but the regulations and laws are certainly good, because in the process of enhancing or developing the things we mention, the sense of nationhood that I mentioned just now, must be accompanied by an understanding of that nationhood. And our nation consists of many ethnic groups, many islands, many religions. There are differences, but it is precisely the sense of nationhood that must convince us that these differences should not be exploited, should not be used to widen those differences. Rather, use them to enhance our strength, in line with what we want and within the limits that I have set.

There are two things which proceed from that nationhood that we must use to achieve greater progress, to motivate the struggle and to struggle for these correct things.

We want a state the likes of which does not exist anywhere in the world, in its characteristics. Just take one thing, the island composition of Indonesia. Don't use this as the seed to make us weaker by having rows between ethnic groups, rows between religions, rows between people of different origins. That will weaken us

all.

Saudara-Saudara, this is the basis of what I have been saying that I feel it neceesary to stress, especially for the region of Timtim which I know well. And it so happens that I handle these things as Minister of Defence and Security in my position as the one responsible in matters of defence.

Other activities or matters which may happen to have arisen here have probably also been experienced in other regions. And in general, these things will be resolved with time, because of understanding, because of cooperation, because of mutual give and take. We have a philosophy consisting of five points and I think you all know this, which has its own characteristic. This special characteristic belongs to all of us and must therefore be properly implemented, looked at and studied, made part of our conviction, absorbed so that you can all implement it really well, in accord with the essence of these gems.

It is indeed true that Timtim occupies a somewhat different position in the sense that East Timor is the centre of attention in certain countries and in the United Nations. So, if a minister goes to Semarang, maybe because his home is there, if an ambassador, a foreign ambassador, goes to Surabaya, it doesn't attract much attention. But if a minister or an official comes to Timtim, it will certainly become quite a big question.

Some days ago, a couple of weeks ago, an ambassador came here and it appears that certain people decided to utilise this in order to draw attention to E Timor. Not enough jobs, this and that! I want people to understand that the lack of jobs doesn't only exist in E Timor. Here, the people looking for work are SMA graduates. In Java, the people looking for jobs are doctors, lawyers, economists but they don't go demonstrating in front of an ambassador. They'd be ashamed to do such a thing! This is our internal affair. Fancy not feeling ashamed to go yelling in front of an ambassador, asking for work! Who would go to a foreign embassy and ask to go to their country, ask for work.

There were once several people from Timtim who went to an embassy in Jakarta and to the ambassador. No way! If anyone wants to try again, go ahead! Just see whether the ambassador will or won't give them a ticket to go to his country and give him a job! I must say, I would feel very ashamed if it were reported to anyone that I had no work and that I had gone to a foreigner. Do you think that foreigners want to give someone a job? Go and ask them whether, after they returned from the demonstration, anyone promised to give them a job in America! Did this happen?

So try to understand, being part of a nation, you are part of the Indonesian nation; we, as individuals, never go begging, pleading, that there are no jobs. Go out and look for work. In the sea, there are millions of fish, so why not set up a group to borrow money from the bank, with a proposal to catch fish or till the land. There will never be enough food for people. Grow food according to the seasons, dont just go out and dig up the land. Do it on a larger scale, and you will definitely find buyers. Nothing will be solved by yelling in front of an ambassador.

Four days after he returned to Jakarta, the American ambassador came to see me, and he did not even mention the demonstration in E Timor. Aren't the parents of the youngsters who demonstrated and who pretend not to know that their children took part in the demonstration ashamed? Covering your faces so as not to see it!

So, as an official who has the authority to do so, I would again like to make a few points. Firstly, there are no jobs not only in E Timor. It's the same in Semarang, in Surabaya, in Balikpapan, in Banjarmasin, in Kupang, in Atambua, in Aceh, in Irian. It's not only here. And the second thing is: yelling in front of an ambassador won't get jobs for anyone. Yelling in front of an ambassador and telling him that that the government is at fault because we don't have jobs won't solve the problem. And if those who yell are people who are getting paid by the government - a bupati, a camat, or whatever - then that is treachery. Shouldn't you be ashamed to be getting wages while at the same time criticising the government? I think it's allowed to criticise the government, it's allowed. No-one says it's not allowed, but don't at the same time take wages from the government. Write to the governor and say: 'Pak Gub., I'm not happy with this government and I want to criticise it. So I am resigning.' Isn't that a better way? Then go out and yell!

And as someone who is of the same religion as the majority of the population here, I have another point to make. The head of our church, the head of the world

Catholic community, came here on a visit a few months ago. He too saw people yelling in Taci Tolu. The Pope went home two or three months ago. Has East Timor been given independence? The Pope does not deal with political matters. All he did was to say that many people in E Timor, many inhabitants have suffered. He began by praying and he went on with friendship. So, are you satisfied? What have you achieved by demonstrating in front of the Pope, demonstrating in front of the American ambassador? Nothing! So, don't start imagining things, don't start dreaming. Creating issues will only cause unrest in this region.

People from outside E Timor, from the other 25 provinces, see this group and pity them - what a pitiful sight! These kids and people think that by moaning in front of foreigners, they can get what they want. All I can feel is pity and together with me, 179 million five hundred Indonesians from other parts, outside E Timor. I can only feel pity.

And it's your history which leads to such things. As I said just now, there used to be three parties which were anyhow created in a great hurry. Then, people tried to promote one and damage the others. In Indonesia, there used to be 51 political parties. 51! Then, people themselves began to wonder why there should be 51 political parties. Through bitter experience, we by stages realised (this) and as you know, now there are only two parties and one Golongan Karya. This is where you can channel your activities. You can do it through the PPP, you can do it do it through the PDI, you can do it through Golkar. But it is no longer possible to channel your aspirations through Fretilin, or through Apodeti or through UDT. They don't exist any more! It's just useless! There is no such thing as UDT, no such thing as Apodeti, no such thing as Fretilin! This is like instigating things from the past because of something which has actually been done. [A literal translation; the meaning is not clear.]

It was all because of those three parties that the things happened on 10 August 1975, at the harbour and in some parts of Dili, when civil war broke out. Many people died. I know many of those people and I know that before integration, they were involved in those activities. Such things can happen, a civil war. Indonesia is a country which has had many civil wars in its 40-year history. Many! Far more people died in those wars than died here. So we try to forget all that and as a nation, hold hands and face the future optimistically. We don't try to look back. 'My brother died, he was killed by him, by his group.' That's all finished, finished! Calm down and don't drag it all up again, don't drag up things from the past. Get rid of these feelings of revenge, get rid of these feelings of wanting to have your own back. Forget it! Unite as part of this great nation, to make a success of the development which is now taking place.

You can discuss things with your representatives in Parliament, you can make direct contact with the government, in this case, with the governor, with his officials. You can ask and contact the commander if it's something to do with security. You will get an answer. But don't start things or repeat things that happened in the past which only resulted in suffering, suffering and suffering.

[Side two of the tape ends here.]

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